'Soledad' Hearing Halted by Melee

From News Dispatches

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 26 — A judge's order to remove the mother of one of the two surviving Soledad Brothers from a courtroom hearing touched off a bloody melee today. A spectator, three policemen and two bailiffs were injured and about a dozen other spectators were roughed up as they fought with police.

Two brothers who tried to stop police from removing Doris Maxwell, mother of John Clutchette, from the courtroom were arrested and booked for investigation of assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest, police said.

One of the brothers, Philip Jake Price, 25, of Oakland, Calif., was hustled out of the courtroom, but burst back in moments later with blood streaming from wounds over his eyes. He was pushed down in a corner, handcuffed and later taken under guard to Mission Emergency Hospital where he was listed in good condition. His brother, Earl M. Price, 27, was not injured.

Police said three officers and two bailiffs also were taken to the hospital for treatment. One policeman suffered a head injury, one a knee injury and the third had lacerations of the face. One of the baliffs also had a knee injury and the other a laceration on the head.

At San Quentin, meanwhile, the first visitors were allowed inside San Quentin Prison since black revolutionary George Jackson and five other persons died in a bloody escape attempt.

In Berkeley, Alfred M. Bingham, the father of missing leftist attorney Stephen Mitchell Bingham, the last man to visit Jackson Saturday before the escape attempt, said he feared his son unwittingly had become part of a "crazy conspiracy" whose others members might now be holding him prisoner.

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Riot Disrupts Hearing For Soledad Brothers

QUENTIN, From A1

A few minutes after returning from meeting Bingham on that day, Jackson had reportedly whipped out a smuggled gun and touched off the 20-minute rampage that ended with Jackson shot to death from a watch tower while running from a cellblock. Inside, guards found the bodies of three guards and two white convicts, shot, beaten, garrotted with electric cords and slashed to death.

The San Rafael Independent-Journal reported today from prison sources that authorities believed Jackson himself may not have been involved in any of the other deaths except that of Sgt. Jere Graham, who was shot in the head. The sources said it was believed another convict may have killed the four others, whose throats were slashed.

A small group of attorneys, most of them representing inmates with pending criminal cases, were thoroughly searched and let in to the prison's visitors center today.

Two of the attorneys, both visiting clients from the adjustment center, said after they returned outside that prisoners' stories of being beaten were true.

Lawyers George Douglas Vaughn, 33, of San Rafael and Michale Friedman, 32, of San Francisco, said they noticed "marks or bruises" on their clients. Guards are "going into the men's cells, apparently, pulling them out," Vaughn said.

Associate warden James Park said the charges of brutality in the wake of the escape attempt were "completely false." He said no prisoners had been mistreated, none had been hurt and none had been denied any necessary medical attention.

The San Quentin Correctional Officers Association bitterly opposed the decision by warden Louis Nelson to admit the attorneys.

All visitors should be barred from the gates until "some real significant procedures" are worked out to assure the safety of guards, Arnold Thompson, association president, said.

The melee broke out just after defendants Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette were brought in to the courtroom behind a barrier of bullet-resistant glass.

Drumgo, Clutchette and George Jackson were accused of hurling a guard off a third-floor balcony to his death at Soledad State Prison last year. Their trial was moved from Salinas, Calif., to San Francisco on a change of venue and the three defendants already had become heroes of the revolutionary left before Jackson's death.

After Judge Carl Allen turned down a defense offer to show proof that Clutchette and Drumgo had been beaten at San Quentin Saturday, Mrs. Doris Maxwell, Clutchette's mother, began screaming at him.

"I checked out (of San Quentin) at 2:55," she shouted. "They say it happened before that." Mrs. Maxwell, visiting her son, was one of the last persons out of the prison visiting area before the escape attempt.

Drumgo and Clutchette had contended at an earlier hearing Tuesday they had been beaten and tortured after the escape attempt in which Jackson, two white prisoners, and three guards were killed.

San Quentin prison officials denied it categorically.

After Mrs. Maxwell began shouting, a bailiff moved toward her to remove her from the courtroom and a male spectator rose and interceded. The courtroom broke up into struggling knots of spectators and bailiffs and the police riot squad, standing by because a melee had also broken out Tuesday, rushed in.

The hearing on several defense motions resumed after

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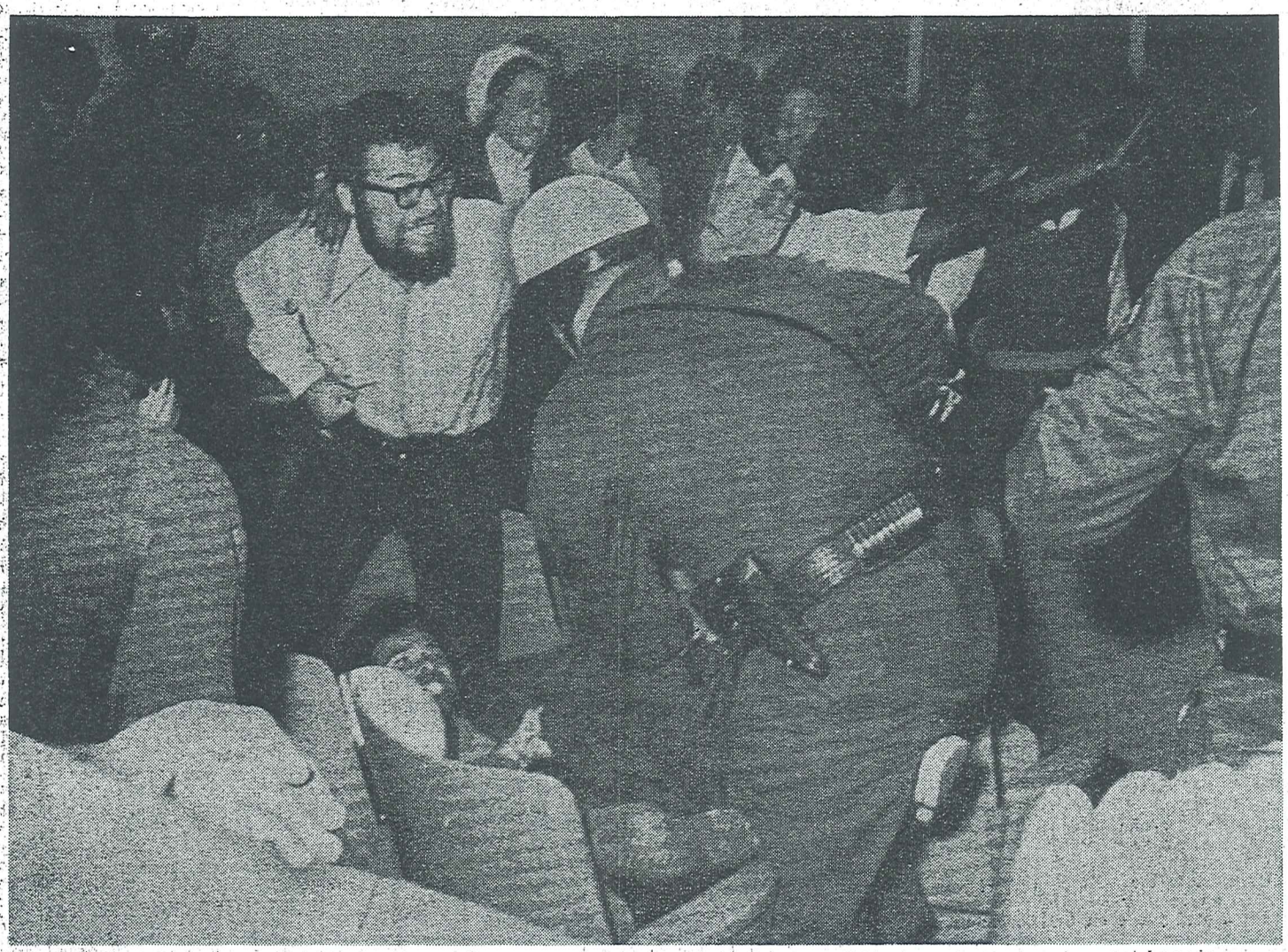

Associated Press

Police and spectators tangle in courtroom skirmish that disrupted the San Francisco trial of John Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo.